

ADDRESS BY

Dr. James C. Fletcher

Administrator

National Aeronautics and Space Administrator

at

Dedication Ceremonies

The Lyndon B. Johnson Space Center

Houston, Texas

August 27, 1973

Mrs. Johnson, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen:

As you know, on February 17th of this year, President Nixon signed into law a joint resolution of the Congress designating this Manned Spacecraft Center of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration as the Lyndon B. Johnson Space Center.

Thus did our Nation act to honor a great son of Texas, an outstanding President, and a crusader in mankind's conquest of space.

We are here today to lend a more personal touch to this formal act of state honoring the late President. ~~We are here today to dedicate this newly named center to future decades of space achievement.~~
~~WE ARE ALSO HERE TODAY~~

Above all, we are here today to re-dedicate ourselves and NASA to achieving the peaceful uses of space which President Johnson saw for America and for mankind. (pause)

Lyndon Baines Johnson was well known to most who are here today. He was at home in this center. Mrs. Johnson, I hope you and your family will always feel welcome and at home here, too. No other person did more to move America and the world rapidly into the space age than Lyndon ~~Baines~~ Johnson. This center that

proudly bears his name is a symbol of what was accomplished by his far-seeing, untiring leadership. I hope that we will always operate this center, and the whole space program, in such a way that Lyndon Johnson would say, "I'm mighty proud of what you're doing here."

(Pause)

It was, of course, ~~(pause)~~ most fitting that the Congress of the United States should find it appropriate to give President Johnson's name to this Center.

^{His}
~~Lyndon Johnson~~'s contributions to the space effort of the United States are well known and are unparalleled. They were the contributions, first, of a gifted lawmaker; then of a trusted advisor to the young President Kennedy; and finally they were the contributions of a President who suddenly bore the full responsibility for achieving the intent of laws he had written and the bold advice he had given.

This is what the Resolution passed by the Congress and signed by President Nixon says of President Johnson:

-- Lyndon B. Johnson "was one of the first of our national leaders to recognize the long-range benefits of an intensive space exploration effort."

-- Lyndon B. Johnson, "as Senate majority leader, established and served as chairman of the Special Committee on Space and Aeronautics which gave the initial direction to the United States

space effort. "

-- Lyndon B. Johnson, "as Vice President of the United States, served as Chairman of the National Aeronautics and Space Council which recommended the goals for the manned space program. "

-- Lyndon B. Johnson, "for five years, as President of the United States, bore ultimate responsibility for the development of the Gemini and Apollo programs which resulted in man's first landing on the moon. "

These are plain words. But when read with an understanding of all that has been accomplished in the space programs which Lyndon Johnson shaped, ^{then} and urged and fought for, the facts speak for themselves. They need no further adornment.

The first 15 years of the space age, those fabulous first 15 years, clearly bear the stamp of the wisdom, the will, and the boldness of this man.

There is another major contribution that is not so well known, and not specifically mentioned in the Resolution. It is the great fight that he led to make sure that the manned space flight programs of the United States would not stop with Apollo and that unmanned exploration of the planets should be intensified.

It took great political courage for President Johnson to put funds for important new programs in his budgets back in 1965 and 1966 and 1967 when the big bills for Apollo were coming due. He, too, faced critics who know the price of everything and the value of nothing. But he prevailed in his view that the programs of the Sixties were only a prelude to the real promise of space. Thanks to his determination and foresight in those difficult years, the Skylab space station is in orbit today, and the Viking spacecraft is being readied to explore Mars in the summer of 1976.

Some have said -- indeed, some are still saying -- that the successful completion of Apollo was a logical stopping place for manned space flight. That, I am thankful to say, was not the logic of LBJ, nor is it the logic of Texas or of this pioneering nation.

The decision to continue with a strong space program after Apollo may, in the long run, prove to be the most important of all the decisive actions Lyndon Johnson took on behalf of space progress.

His support of Skylab and Viking and other new programs in the latter years of his presidency enabled President Nixon to continue them, and then to move forward with his own contribution to the productive and profitable use of space -- the Space Shuttle.

Without these basic affirmative decisions of President Johnson, there would not be any space center in Houston. Thanks to his recognition of the value of America's role in space, the future of this center is bright, and the prospects of the whole world are the better for it.

President Johnson was very proud of the leading role he played in the drafting and passage of the Space Act which created NASA in 1958. And he made no secret of it.

Many of you may recall what President Johnson said here at this center on March 1, 1968.

"I have spent almost 38 years in the Nation's Capital," he said. "In all of that period of time, I have voted for thousands of bills and I have written a few. But the one legislative enactment that I suppose I am proudest of is the bill that I wrote and introduced that made possible NASA, that brought into existence this great facility and others in the program throughout this Nation."

Mr. Johnson repeated this statement on a number of occasions, including his last press conference as President.

James Webb, here on the stand, who was Administrator of NASA under Presidents Kennedy and Johnson, probably had a closer view and a keener appreciation of what Lyndon Johnson

thought about the space program and did for the space program than any other man. I would therefore like to quote a few words of his, spoken at a time when he had already retired as head of NASA and Mr. Johnson was about to leave the White House. At a White House dinner shortly before the first Apollo flight to the moon, Mr. Webb said to the President:

"...it was your legislative leadership, Mr. President, and skill that provided a success framework in the National Aeronautics and Space Act of 1958.

"In 1961, large goals were set. And here again, it was your executive leadership that drove us forward. But even with a first-class legislative foundation and large goals, success could only come through continued strong commitment and support. / That, you have always provided, through every phase of each space age generation, ..." as old programs approached completion and new ones had to be started.

Mr. Webb then proposed this toast: "...to our great space age patron and leader, the President of the United States."

I was especially impressed with Mr. Webb's remark that "even with a first-class legislative foundation and large goals, success could only come through continued strong commitment and support." This was never more true than it is today.

In a world of rapid change, priorities shift quickly. The urgent needs of today are soon overshadowed by new concerns, new problems, and new priorities. And because we take pride in our pragmatism, we Americans tend to be an impatient people. We insist that government programs produce immediate, visible results.

Pragmatism is commendable, so long as it does not cause us to be shortsighted or succumb to the temptation to put aside programs of far-reaching importance -- those whose long-term returns are difficult to define -- in favor of instant-answer efforts. Such impatience frequently leads us to deal with symptoms instead of causes. As a nation we should have Great Expectations. But we should also have the patience and the foresight -- and the commitment to fulfill these expectations. The space program is not an instant-answer program. It is a long-term investment in the future of mankind, an investment that deserves the support and commitment of all our citizens.

New technology for any purpose has to be put under development 10 or 15 years ahead of the time when we first put it to use. It cannot be called up on demand. Space technology is no exception to this principle.

Fortunately for us, and for the world, the four Presidents during the first 15 years of the space age have had the courage, vision, and self-confidence to support a strong U. S. space effort.

(Slight pause)
When we think of the long-range future of the space program, it is interesting to recall the predictions President Johnson made when he visited here in March of 1968.

During the plane ride from Washington, he had talked with two distinguished scientists, Dr. Frederick Seitz, President of the National Academy of Sciences, and Dr. Stark Draper of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

"Today," President Johnson said, "I want to review for you some of the things we talked about coming down here this afternoon.

"I predict that 10 years from now some other President will come here... and stand where I am, and congratulate the people of this center -- some of you may still be around -- for your amazing achievements.

"He will see them at work in a giant station in space. He will see them at work assessing the exact status and the value of wheat and rice as they are growing all over this earth. He will see them predicting with phenomenal accuracy the amount of water that is available to each farmer for growing next year's crops.

"He will see them controlling thousands of peaceful air and space vehicles that are at work for mankind in all the regions of the earth.

"He will see them developing a worldwide overview of all of our great cities, an overview that can be used by scientists and engineers to guide new economic and political institutions...

"Political scientists and social scientists -- as well as physical scientists, engineers, and administrators -- will then know, because of the work at this Center, more than our generation can ever know about the causes of pollution, about the use of recreational areas, about all the knowledge that mankind needs if we are to continue our steady advance toward a great destiny."

It seems remarkably prophetic, doesn't it?

These predictions about what a future President might see here were made five years ago, and he was looking 10 years into the future, to about 1978.

Much of what he predicted, as many of you know, is already being done by ERTS-1 and by the astronauts using the Earth Resources Experiment Package on Skylab. We have already demonstrated the great value of using satellites and remote sensors and computer printouts to get a better understanding of what is happening to our environment, locally and on a global scale, and what can be done

about it. We may not have the new generation of earth observation and environmental satellites in operation when the President comes here in 1978, but I hope we will have such operational systems under development as approved programs by that time. I hope so and I expect so.

President Johnson, in his prediction, spoke of a "giant space station" in orbit. Well, we already have Skylab, and it is big, as big as a three-bedroom house, and it is a most important step forward in demonstrating the useful purposes that manned space stations can serve. We will have something better than the space station --- the versatile, reusable Space Shuttle. The Space Shuttle can be outfitted as a space laboratory for many different missions of several weeks or longer, and in this mode will serve as a space station. Someday it will serve as the logistics link between the space ports of earth and the permanent manned laboratories, observatories, and industrial enterprises we will have in earth orbit. In any event, when our future President visits the Johnson Space Center in 1978 or 1979, it may well be during or just after the first Space Shuttle flight in orbit, and he can proclaim the opening of a new chapter in the fast-moving story of man's efforts to explore and use space. Our first satellite was placed in orbit in 1958; our first manned flight to the moon was in 1968; our first Space Shuttle

flight in earth orbit will be in 1978. We are, indeed, a fast-moving nation.

It is most appropriate that we take time out today to honor the man who did so much to give America this course and this momentum into space. And now, if I, too, may make a prediction, it is that many Presidents of the United States will come to the Lyndon B. Johnson Space Center in the decades ahead, and each will draw strength and inspiration from the fact that there was/in the early years/a man with the vision, the courage, the will, and the leadership of the man we honor today. We honor him/ and the right and privilege to use his name honors this center. We are most grateful, Mrs. Johnson, to you, Mrs. Robb, Mrs. Nugent, and your grandson for being with us today.

The people of this center have long felt it should bear the name of Lyndon B. Johnson not only because of his personal contributions to progress in space, but because he was known as a man of decisive action who got things done. That is the tradition of NASA, and that is why we are so honored to have this center bear his name. And you, Mrs. Johnson, knowing best that it is something the late President would have been proud of, too, have ^{enthusiastically} joined us here today to make it truly official.

I thank you.

(Ask Chris and Jim Webb to escort Mrs. Johnson to the sculpture.)

Witcher Speech, LBJ Space Center Dedication, Houston
Aug 27, 1973

P73-10311

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This center that proudly bears his name is a symbol of what was accomplished by his far-seeing, untiring leadership. I hope that we will always operate this center, and the whole space program, in such a way that Lyndon Johnson would say, "I'm mighty proud of what you're doing here."

It was, of course, no surprise that the Congress of the United States should find it fitting and appropriate to give President Johnson's name to this operating center of the manned space programs.

Lyndon Johnson's contributions to the space effort of the United States are well known. They are unparalleled. They were the contributions, first, of a gifted lawmaker; then of a trusted advisor to the young President Kennedy; and finally they were the contributions of a President who suddenly bore the full responsibility for achieving the intent of laws he had written and the bold advice he had given.

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President Eisenhower joined with the leaders of Congress in chartering NASA as the nation's civilian space agency; and, although the manned lunar program was not scheduled during his Presidency, he gave the all-important go-ahead signal to start building the big rocket engines that powered the Saturn V and made it possible for us to meet the Apollo goals set by President Kennedy.

In 1961, President Kennedy took the responsibility for ordering Project Apollo to proceed on a demanding schedule, and a public schedule, because he sensed the tremendous importance of keeping America first in science and technology in the perilous years of the Sixties. He had expert advice, ably organized for him by his Vice President, but it was he who had to make the decision and the appeal to Congress and the nation. The current improved state of international relations helps bear out the wisdom of that bold decision 12 years ago.

In the middle of the last decade, when the burden of responsibility had become President Johnson's, he re-affirmed the national commitment to Apollo, as might have been expected, but then went on to urge and fight for new commitments that would keep America in space after Apollo, and for such new programs as Skylab and Viking.

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And in due course it became the responsibility, and the opportunity, of President Nixon and his Administration to propose the nation's course for the next 15 years in space. In January of 1972 President Nixon made the very important, and very necessary, decision to give top priority to the Space Shuttle during this decade, and to the practical benefits to be gained from manned and unmanned space missions in Earth orbit. President Nixon has also personally supported two very important ventures in international cooperation in space -- the Apollo-Soyuz Test Project to be carried out together with the Soviet Union in 1975 and the proposal by a number of Western European countries to assume responsibility for developing the special module called Spacelab for use with the Space Shuttle. The new initiatives of President Johnson and President Nixon, backed by strong bipartisan majorities in the Congress, have determined the shape and scope of our space program for most of this decade. But important new decisions -- and new commitments -- will have to be made later in the decade. And this center will have an important role in preparing for them.

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President Johnson, in his prediction, spoke of a "giant space station" in orbit. Well, we already have Skylab, and it is big, as big as a three-bedroom house, and it is a most important step forward in demonstrating the useful purposes that manned space stations can serve. But we will not have the "giant space station" that President Johnson was talking about by 1978. We will have something better, or at least something that is more needed in the immediate future, and that is the versatile, reusable Space Shuttle space transportation system. The Space Shuttle will not be a "giant space station", but it can be outfitted as a space laboratory for many different missions of several weeks or longer. And it will some day serve as the logistics link between the space ports of earth and the permanent manned laboratories, observatories, and industrial enterprises we will have in earth orbit. In any event, when our future President visits the Johnson

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Space Center in 1978 or 1979, it may well be during or just after the first Space Shuttle flight in orbit, and he can proclaim the opening of a new chapter in the fast-moving story of man's efforts to explore and use space. From our first satellite in orbit in 1958, to our first manned flight to the Moon in 1968, and now on to the first Space Shuttle flight in earth orbit in 1978, that is indeed a fast-moving story.

It is most appropriate that we take time out today to honor the man who did so much to give America this course and this momentum into space. And now, if I, too, may make a prediction, it is that many Presidents of the United States will come to the Lyndon B. Johnson Space Center in the decades ahead, and each will draw strength and inspiration from the fact that there was in the early years a man with the vision, the courage, the will, and the leadership of the man we honor today. We honor him, and the right and privilege to use his name honors this center. We are most grateful, Mrs. Johnson, to you and your family, for being with us today.

The people of this center have long felt it should bear the name of LBJ, not only because of his personal contributions to progress in space, but because he was known as a man of decisive action who got things done. That is the tradition of NASA, and that is why we are so honored to have this center bear his name. And you, Mrs. Johnson, knowing best that it is something the late President would have been proud of, too, have joined us here today to make it truly official.

I thank you.